

First elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1986, Allen has served the Sixty-First district with distinction for the past twenty years. During his tenure he was a strong proponent of our Second Amendment rights and worked hard to protect the family and our religious liberties. A social and fiscal conservative, he voted consistently to ensure that Alabama provided an economic atmosphere in which business and industry could grow and prosper.

Allen is a true friend of the volunteer fire fighter. Through his efforts, a three mil revenue tax was enacted in 1999, and amended in 2004, to provide badly needed funding to the volunteer fire departments in Pickens County. This funding allows the volunteer fire departments to purchase equipment, provide training and cover operating costs. This has greatly enhanced their firefighting capabilities, thus reducing insurance rates and thereby saving money for Alabama families.

He served as a Commissioner on the Alabama Forestry Commission from 1979 to 1983, served as president of the Alabama Division for the Society of American Foresters, is a Trustee of the Alabama Forest Products Workman's Compensation Fund, served as president and is a lifetime member of the Alabama Wildlife Federation, is a member of the Alabama Cattlemen's Association, a member of the Sierra Club and a member of sixteen volunteer fire departments. Also, Allen has served on the board of directors for the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority since his appointment by Governor Guy Hunt in 1991.

He has been distinguished as the recipient of the Governor's Conservationist of the Year Award in Forestry in 1982, the Kelly Mosley Environmental Award in 1985 and the APA Southwestern United States Technical Writing Award in 1981.

Of all of Allen's accomplishments, perhaps his greatest achievement was convincing the former JoAnn Kimberly to marry him. They were married on September 15, 1949 and are the proud parents of five children; Butch, Allen, Jr., Kim, James and Michael. Allen and JoAnn are faithful members of Reform First United Methodist Church where Allen has served as a Lay Leader and Lay Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to honor State Representative Allen Layson for his many achievements and his enduring impact on his country, state, community, friends and family. He is a man of great dignity and character who takes pride in the accomplishments of those he has helped over the years. Allen is an inspiring role model for all of us and I join his family, friends and colleagues in wishing him God's richest blessings in his retirement.

HONORING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE VETERANS HOMES

SPEECH OF

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 347, I am pleased to support this resolution hon-

oring the work of the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the 119 homes across the country that honor our nation's heroes.

I am proud to work on closely with the State Veterans Home in Paramus, New Jersey. This excellent facility is run by caring individuals who work hard each day to see that our veterans are given the care that they earned sacrificing for our nation. Veterans Affairs Secretary Nicholson recently had the opportunity to tour the facility with me and see the tremendous effort that Doris Neibart, director of the home, and all the nurses and staff have put into caring for veterans in the final stages of life's journey.

Throughout the 20th Century and now into the 21st, the American soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine has been a force for good in this world. Working together, they have kept our nation safe from the threats of fascism, communism, and now terrorism. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude and the best care we can provide.

Our nation has a rich history of promoting freedom and spreading democracy, a history that was made possible by countless individuals who served in our armed forces. We remember all who contributed as well as those that stand ready to serve the cause of freedom today. I am proud to represent so many selfless and brave heroes and to honor those who work for their welfare.

GROWING SUPPORT FOR THE SAFE COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced legislation in the House of Representatives aimed at addressing the looming financial crisis facing the Nation, H.R. 5552—the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act. The bill would establish a national bipartisan commission that will put everything—entitlement spending as well as all other Federal programs and our Nation's tax policies—on the table and require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the process set in 1988 to close military bases. Mandating congressional action on the panel's recommendations is what differentiates this commission from previous ones.

Support for the bill is coming from both sides of the aisle. I submit for the Record a recent analysis by the Heritage Foundation; a letter of support from the Concord Coalition; a letter from Douglas Holt-Eakin, former director of the Congressional Budget Office, and letters from several former Members.

I also am pleased to submit today the names of 20 of my colleagues who are co-sponsoring the SAFE Commission measure and urge the remainder of my colleagues to join as well. This legislation will be good for the future of America.

THE CONCORD COALITION,
Arlington, VA, June 28, 2006.

Hon. FRANK WOLF,
House of Representatives
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. WOLF: On behalf of The Concord Coalition, I am writing to express our deep

appreciation for your leadership in sponsoring the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Act, which would establish a bipartisan commission to recommend legislation addressing our nation's unsustainable long-term fiscal outlook.

We strongly agree with you that the need for serious action is not just an economic imperative but a moral one as well. We also share your view that partisan divisions in Washington have become so wide that a commission may now be the only way forward on this issue. By establishing a fiscal policy commission with a broad mandate, meaningful public engagement, and the ability to consider all policy options, your legislation represents a very constructive step toward bringing about consensus solutions.

The demographic and fiscal challenges facing the budget in the years ahead are well known. Analysts of diverse ideological perspectives and nonpartisan officials at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have all warned that current fiscal policy is unsustainable over the long-term.

What is needed now is a clear commitment to address these issues in a straightforward, generationally equitable and bipartisan manner. Achieving consensus around the hard choices that must eventually be made will require open minds and bipartisan cooperation. Your legislation would establish a process to do just that.

Recently, The Concord Coalition organized a forum with experts from across the political spectrum to discuss the possibility of establishing a bipartisan commission to deal with our long-term fiscal outlook. Three conclusions from the forum stand out:

The commission must have meaningful participation and input from a broad range of views. Bipartisan support is essential to enacting and maintaining policies that will put the budget on a fiscally sustainable course.

The commission should have a broad mandate with no limitations on what policy options the commission can consider or preconditions on what must be included—or not included—in a proposal. Everything must be on the table, including revenues as well as entitlements and other spending.

The commission should engage the public in a dialogue about the long-term fiscal challenges and the tradeoffs that will be necessary to bring about a more secure and sustainable economic future.

The Concord Coalition commends your proposal because it recognizes each of these conclusions. The SAFE Act would establish a bipartisan commission of experts and legislators appointed by the President and Congressional leaders of both parties. The Commission would be directed to hold hearings across the country and incorporate the input from the public in its report. This is a very welcome provision. The public should be treated as if it were, in effect, a member of the commission. Doing so will enhance the commission's credibility and help build acceptance for its recommendations. Our experience hosting meetings around the nation on this issue has demonstrated that when the American people are armed with the facts and given the opportunity for honest dialogue, they are willing to set priorities and make the hard choices that often are not made in Washington.

Most importantly, the Commission would be allowed to consider all policy options to address the imbalance between long-term spending commitments and projected revenues, including reforms of entitlement programs and tax laws. In our view, this is an essential prerequisite for attracting well-respected individuals to serve on the commission and for finding solutions that are both substantive and politically viable.

We particularly commend you for your willingness to consider constructive suggestions for changes to achieve broader bipartisan support and increase the prospect that the commission will produce a balanced proposal that can be enacted into law. In that regard, we would suggest a few changes that we believe would strengthen the bill and help ensure the commission receives the bipartisan support essential to its success.

We believe the commission would have greater credibility if the appointees were more evenly divided between parties, potentially with some commission members appointed jointly or as a result of bipartisan consultation. Further, we would suggest that the commission have bipartisan co-chairs. We would also encourage you to consider a more expansive legislative process, which would allow for greater debate of policy tradeoffs by allowing the consideration of budget neutral amendments. Those who oppose the priorities and tradeoffs recommended by the commission should be challenged to say what they would do instead and given the opportunity to put forward alternative policies to address the problem.

A commission isn't a silver bullet that will solve our fiscal problems by itself. It will still take action by Members of Congress and the administration to adopt the tough choices. But a commission with credibility and bipartisan support could provide the leadership necessary to ensure that these issues receive the attention and serious consideration they deserve.

You deserve great credit for your willingness to undertake the difficult but absolutely essential task of focusing attention on the tough choices our nation faces. The Concord Coalition stands ready to assist in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. BIXBY,
Executive Director.

THE WOLF SAFE COMMISSION ACT: A CHANCE
TO GET THE BUDGET BACK ON TRACK

(By Stuart Butler)

The recent Mid-Session Review by the Office of Management and Budget underscores the facts that sensible tax reform stimulates the economy and that faster growth swells revenue to the government as a byproduct of new jobs and extra income for Americans. The review also confirms the overall, disturbing long-term budget picture indicated in the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) longterm forecast. Under current law, both taxes and spending will rise rapidly during future decades towards European levels, with an ever-growing government taking a larger and larger proportion of the nation's income and threatening America's future economic growth. Decisive action is needed.

But faced with this threat, Washington is paralyzed. Rather than seriously tackling the tsunami of entitlement spending that will hit the budget after the baby boomers begin to retire, Congress actually made the situation far worse by enacting the huge Medicare prescription drug benefit. And while the Bush tax reforms have significantly helped in the short term, even if made permanent they would shave only about one percentage point from the future growth in taxes. Absent any additional reforms, the CBO forecasts that, with the Bush tax cuts extended, federal taxes will top 20 percent of GDP by about 2025 and approach 23 percent of GDP by 2045. The historical average, and today's level, is just over 18 percent of GDP.

With Congress polarized and paralyzed, some Members of Congress, along with President Bush, are exploring the idea of a bipartisan commission as a way to break away

from the path of rapidly rising spending and taxes. President Bush pressed for an entitlements commission in his State of the Union address. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) has sponsored legislation (5. 3521) that includes a commission to review the long-term solvency of Social Security and Medicare. Meanwhile, Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA) has crafted a commission bill ("The SAFE Commission Act," H.R. 5552) specifically intended to win bipartisan support for bold action to secure the country's fiscal and economic future. Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) has introduced that bill in the Senate (S. 3491).

Commissions can help break a political logjam. They can also become vehicles for action that achieves a short-term political fix and yet does little in the long term or even makes things worse. So the political dynamics and mandate of a commission are critical. Fortunately, the Wolf commission bill recognizes these facts of political life and offers real hope for sensible action. A reason for this is that in its instructions to the commission, the bill wisely combines reform with fiscal changes in a manner that could achieve a breakthrough.

The core of the fiscal problem is the sharp projected rise in future entitlement spending, especially spending on programs for middle-class retirees. Contrary to many people's perception, taxes are not falling—as noted, taxes are projected to rise steadily to record levels under current law, in real terms and as a percentage of GDP. Still, in today's political deadlock many lawmakers maintain that tax revenue must be part of the equation if they are to have the political "cover" to accept curbs on popular entitlements.

But for good reasons, conservatives strongly resist the idea of raising taxes. For one thing, taxes are not the problem—spending is. Moreover, raising tax rates or instituting new taxes would threaten economic growth, compounding the economic harm associated with government spending. Further, raising taxes likely would reduce the pressure on Congress to curb spending or, worse still, encourage lawmakers increase their spending promises.

The Wolf bill seeks a solution to this political equation. It creates a bipartisan commission intended to address the "unsustainable imbalance" between federal commitments and revenues while increasing national savings and making the budget process give greater emphasis to long-term fiscal issues. While the commission could consider a range of approaches, the bill places emphasis on two: reforms that would limit the growth of entitlements while strengthening the safety net and tax reforms that would make the tax system more economically efficient and improve economic growth. The commission would hold public hearings around the country to discuss the long-term fiscal problem, and its recommendations would receive "fast-track" consideration by Congress.

By combining a slowdown in entitlement spending with reforms to strengthen assistance to the needy, a commission proposal could win support of liberals and others who worry that surging middle-class retiree spending in the future will crowd out safety net spending. And by placing an emphasis on pro-growth tax reform, a commission proposal could also lead to some additional revenues not by raising taxes but thanks instead to faster economic growth—just as the Bush tax reforms produced the recent sharp increase in federal revenues. Combining these features in a commission proposal could lead to a package that conservatives, liberals, and moderates all believe would advance their agendas—a necessary result for

an economically sound agreement to succeed in a polarized Congress.

Some might argue that appointing a commission to address the long-term fiscal situation is an abrogation of responsibility by Congress. In an obvious sense, it is. But the Wolf bill also shows that lawmakers recognize that America's budgeting system is broken and in the current environment cannot lead to a responsible long-term federal budget. Representative Wolf's commission proposal seeks to alter those destructive dynamics in order to secure a sound economy for future generations.

Stuart M. Butler, Ph.D., is Vice President for Domestic and Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation.

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,

Washington, DC, July 13, 2006.

Congressman FRANK R. WOLF,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: I am writing regarding your proposed SAFE Commission. I applaud your desire to address the nation's long-term fiscal problems and thank you for your efforts.

The work of the proposed commission is central to the continued international competitiveness of the United States and the standard of living of future generations. The future growth of mandatory spending is among the greatest of economic threats, and it is entirely self-inflicted. It is imperative that our nation restructure its approach to old-age income, health insurance, and long-term care, and it is better to do it sooner than later.

I have taken the liberty of attaching a speech that I gave a while back. The final two sections make these points in greater detail.

Best of luck in your efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN.

THE URBAN INSTITUTE,
Washington, DC, June 22, 2006.

Representative FRANK WOLF,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WOLF: In response to your letter of June 16, I strongly support your bill to establish a national bipartisan commission on entitlement spending and tax policy. Although many are cynical about the prospects for the success of any commission, I think that you are right that the current political climate is not conducive to passing constructive legislation without some prodding from the outside.

I also believe that the American public is not ready to accept the sacrifices necessary to avoid a crisis, because the dire nature of the situation has not been well communicated by policy makers. Therefore, I particularly commend your idea of holding town meetings across the country and I would hope that the commission has a large budget for this purpose, because I believe that we need lots of meetings. Ideally, the commission would first produce a white paper that could be discussed at the meetings. It would outline the problem in the most objective way possible and describe the major options for solving it.

It is interesting to note that Canada had such meetings prior to a significant reform of their social security system and Canadian officials will tell you that they were extremely helpful in finding a solution. Similarly, Britain is in the midst of reforming their public pension system and they used large focus groups to test their options. I would prefer a town meeting to a focus group format, but however one proceeds, the involvement of the public is absolutely crucial.

I wish you success in getting your idea enacted and would be willing to help in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER.

WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL
CENTER FOR SCHOLARS,
Washington, DC, July 7, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,
Washington, DC.

DEAR FRANK: Thank you for sending along your excellent proposal to establish a national bipartisan commission on America's looming fiscal crisis. I agree that we must hastily address the very grave financial challenges before our nation. You have laid out a thoughtful and effective way forward. In particular, it is important to put everything on the table—entitlement spending, federal programs, and tax policy. Mandating congressional action would also ensure that a prospective commission does not issue a report that gathers dust on a shelf.

On another note, the Iraq Study Group continues to make excellent progress, and I once again thank you for your leadership and support of our efforts.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,

LEE H. HAMILTON.

MANATT JONES GLOBAL STRATEGIES,
Washington, DC, June 26, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: Thank you for your letter and for sending me a copy of your legislation, H.R. 5552. I can't speak highly enough in commending you for leading this much needed effort and for the comprehensiveness of your proposal.

As a former House Budget Committee Chairman who subsequently headed the American Stock Exchange among other business activities since leaving the Congress, I have been appalled and discouraged by the recklessness and disregard of our government's fiscal policy. These unconscious able deficits and mounting federal debt load financed primarily by foreigners are an economic time bomb waiting to explode. If I were managing a private company this irresponsibly, the shareholders should demand my resignation.

We hear much talk about our national security and energy security. But to put our economic security so much in the hands of foreign interests is gambling at its worst.

In addition to the economic dangers, this is also a moral issue in that our generation is saddling our children and grand-children with the responsibility for paying off our profligacy. That can only reduce the standard of living of future generations. How can we justify such immorality.

I am so proud that you are stepping forward to try to pass legislation with teeth to force both the Congress and the Executive Branch to make hard choices to get our fiscal house on a path to responsibility. I hope that you will make this a bi-partisan effort. I will be pleased to support you in every way I can and to urge my fellow Democrats to join you in this effort.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES R. JONES.

RECOGNIZING SAMUEL GILBERT OAS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Samuel Gilbert Oas a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 9, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Samuel has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Samuel has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Samuel Gilbert Oas for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, due to a mechanical failure with my voting card, my vote in favor of H. Res. 921 was not recorded (rollcall vote No. 391).

I strongly support the state of Israel, and am in full support of its actions to defend itself against the attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah. Both of these terrorist organizations are comprised of terrorist thugs and must be rooted out in order for peace to be achieved in the region, and their use of civilians as shields is deplorable.

I am grateful that Israel has taken so many steps to wage a careful, targeted effort, focused on eliminating terrorist elements while also minimizing other damage.

I applaud the President for moving forward on the right track in demanding that Hezbollah be eliminated from Lebanon, and also hope this will be the opportunity for the Arab world to unite against terrorism. Iran and Syria should take notice—supporting terrorist organizations is not a proper activity of governments.

Mr. Speaker, I once again reiterate my strong support of H. Res. 921, and would have voted in favor if my voting card had registered successfully.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday July 24th, I was unavoidably detained due to family matters I had to attend to in Seattle, WA and was not present for rollcall votes on that day.

Had I been present I would have voted: "Yea" on rollcall 394, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a pilot program under

which up to 15 States may issue electronic Federal migratory bird hunting stamps.

"Yea" on rollcall 395, to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

"Yea" on rollcall 396, to establish a grant program whereby moneys collected from violations of the corporate average fuel economy program are used to expand infrastructure necessary to increase the availability of alternative fuels.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND LEWIS RANDOLPH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Reverend Lewis Randolph who will celebrate 30 years as pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church on October 14th in my hometown of Flint, Michigan.

Reverend Randolph was installed as pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in 1976 as the church's fifteenth pastor. He quickly made an imprint upon the congregation by a twofold plan of renovating the physical structure of the church grounds and by evangelizing in the community.

Starting in 1979 and continuing over the next 30 years, Pastor Randolph renovated the sanctuary, improved the parking lots, added a new kitchen, dining facility, and improved the upper level of the church.

As a part of the church's covenant "to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality"; Reverend Randolph has organized and supported numerous auxiliaries and ministries. These include the Voices of Antioch Choir, the Usher Board and a Concerned Committee to help persons return to the church. He added a new Easter Sunday worship service, supports a ministry in Haiti, teaches a weekly Bible class, and distributes Bibles and baskets of food in the community.

Recognizing the need to encourage young people, he has made sure that Antioch Missionary Baptist Church has been well represented in the Young Peoples Department of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated over the past several years. Under his tutelage several pastors began their ministries with his guidance and direction.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Reverend Lewis Randolph. The Flint community is a better place because of his leadership.

RECOGNIZING DREW KELLY FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Drew Kelly, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities